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biography of Rückert that has yet appeared. The chief defect consists in the frequent references which are made to the author's "Friedrich Rückert's Leben und Dichtungen," published several years ago. It is exceedingly annoying to the reader to be constantly informed that this point is cleared up or that poem analyzed in some previous monograph which he does not possess. Every biography should be complete in itself, so far at least as essential points are concerned. Professor Fortlage's little volume aims to give a critical survey of Rückert's works in their logical and chronological connection, and accomplishes this purpose in an excellent manner and with truly philosophical comprehensiveness. The *Gesamtausgabe*, just issued by Sauerländer at Frankfort, has been arranged with studious care, and is the first edition printed from original manuscripts preserved and corrected by Rückert himself. All former editions have been printed from copies of them which did not even have the benefit of the poet's subsequent revision, and are therefore more or less defective.

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5. — *Pre-historic Nations ; or, Inquiries concerning some of the great Peoples and Civilizations of Antiquity, and their probable Relation to a still older Civilization of the Ethiopians, or Cushites, of Arabia*. By JOHN D. BALDWIN, A. M. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1869. 12mo. pp. vii., 414.

THIS volume might quite as properly have been styled "The Pre-historic Nation." By some means or other, Mr. Baldwin has persuaded himself that there was a certain people in olden time to whom is to be credited nearly the whole of ancient civilization, and whose claims to honor have hitherto been strangely overlooked by all students of antiquity. This people he calls Cushites ; and he assigns them as their country the conveniently situated peninsula of Arabia, whence their influence radiated in all directions, — through India and Farther India on the one side, and to the most distant borders of Africa and Europe on the other.

How Mr. Baldwin has arrived at this persuasion does not appear. That any good and sufficient reasons for it are set forth in his book, no intelligent and cautious reader will be inclined to admit. Hardly a single one even of the minor points involved in the grand theory receives a satisfactory establishment. The author's methods of proof are more curiously subjective than those of any writer we have read in a long time. His arguments are mainly reducible to three. First, such and such things "must have" been so and so (for example, the Phœnicians must have possessed the mariner's compass, and must have circum-

navigated Africa; and ancient star-gazers must have had telescopes): if we do not quite see the necessity, so much the worse for us. Secondly, certain other things are generally acknowledged; or, all competent authorities agree to them: and the points thus assumed to be settled by common consent, and no longer calling for even a show of argumentation, are apt to be of the most obscure or questionable character, or of the widest bearing, involving the author's whole thesis; so that we cannot help fancying that the class of competent authorities is in each case a very limited one, consisting of Mr. Baldwin himself and some person whose views are accepted by him. Thirdly, those who put faith in the old systems of chronology, founded by Usher and others on the Hebrew Scriptures, are roundly denounced; and, on the other hand, those are not less accused of stupid incredulity and unreasoning scepticism who shall doubt, as insufficiently founded, the new Cushite theory: over and over again we are warned, in nearly equivalent phrase, that "nothing is so liable to absurd exhibitions of credulity and unreason as morbid scepticism directed by invincible prejudice."

Many times, too, we are informed that "various important considerations" lead us to take a certain view, no hint being vouchsafed us of what these considerations are. Or that peculiar line of reasoning is employed which consists in first suggesting something as probable, then presently repeating it as true without reservation, and finally treating it as undeniable, and drawing from it momentous conclusions.

That our description of Mr. Baldwin's method is no caricature, we appeal to every sober-minded reader of his work to attest. Of penetrating and unprejudiced research, of cautious induction, of critical estimate of authorities, we find here no trace. If historical science, if the study of antiquity, has made any noteworthy advance during the past half-century, this volume is to be set aside as valueless: for it exhibits a complete return to the old method of antecedent persuasion, and special pleading in its establishment and defence. Mr. Baldwin tells us that "scepticism is neither the middle nor the end of true philosophy; historical criticism should be able not only to destroy falsehood, but also to establish truth"; and he has evidently written under the urgent promptings of this conviction. We believe, however, that no duty or obligation whatever rests upon historical criticism, except simply to do what it can with the materials at its command, not striving either to build up or to pull down, but aiming only to distinguish what is true from what is false. If its activity is in so large measure destructive, it is because there have been so many incautious constructors whose work needs to be cleared away. We have no whit more of respect for Usher's chronology than Mr. Baldwin has; but if our choice is to lie only between the

Hebrew traditions as interpreted by Usher, and the Hindu Puranas as interpreted by Wilford, we shall not long hesitate to prefer the former ; and we deem the worst of the theories which Mr. Baldwin rejects and derides equally stable with the splendid edifice of Cushite civilization which he has reared upon so narrow and inadequate a foundation of facts.

We cannot, upon the whole, commend this book either to those who are versed or to those who are unversed in the study of the past. For the former, it is too much a congeries of assumptions and assertions, without new facts or new groupings of facts ; and the latter would be bewildered by it, not knowing how to distinguish what is good in it from what is bad. We should admire the author's fearlessness and independence of opinion, if he were less dogmatic and denunciatory.

6. — *History of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy.* By JOHN FOSTER KIRK. With Portraits. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1868. Vol. III. 8vo. pp. viii., 555.

MR. KIRK'S third volume embraces a period of little more than two years, as it opens at the end of October, 1474, and closes on the 12th of January, 1477, the day on which the Duke of Burgundy was buried at Nancy. The scale on which this work is prepared, considered as biography, is not too large ; considered as history, — and the biography of Charles of Burgundy necessarily belongs to history, — it is far larger than it should be. Had Mr. Kirk retrenched his work throughout, he could have dispensed with a third volume ; and such retrenchment might have been made without sacrificing anything really useful. He is fond of introducing explanations that are not needed, and of making suggestions which often are superfluous, and occasionally impertinent. We frankly admit that we have read with much pleasure most of the matter which we complain of as superfluous in its present place ; but the fact that it is often instructive, and not unfrequently entertaining, does not render its appearance in the "*History of Charles the Bold*" any the less inartistic, while it swells the work unduly, and thus gives countenance to that practice of making big books which is one of the serious evils of the time. Mr. Kirk, too, might have omitted what we may call his exclamatory matter, with some gain of space, and with great improvement in point of taste. His third volume abounds in rhetoric which would be offensive in a sensational novel, and is unpardonable in a grave history. We have in profusion passages like the following : "Shade of Nicholas von Diesbach, listen, and